

Application No. 10/024,269  
Amendment dated December 14, 2005  
Office Action dated September 7, 2005

### **Listing of Claims**

Claims 1-44 (canceled)

45. (currently amended) A slide case for holding and transporting at least one slide, the slide case comprising:

a rack comprising

~~four~~ substantially planar ~~and parallel opposed first and second side walls,~~  
and

~~substantially planar and parallel opposed end walls, each of the end walls~~  
having respective ends rigidly connected together,

lower edges adapted to support the rack on a surface ~~to ends of the first~~  
~~and second side walls,~~

a first support bar connected only to one of the walls and comprising

a first longitudinal edge extending over a length of, and connected  
to, an inner surface of the ~~first side~~ one of the walls to cantilever the first  
support bar from the ~~first side~~ one of the walls,

a second longitudinal edge being deflectable with respect to the  
~~first side~~ one of the walls, the second longitudinal edge and being spaced away  
from the lower edges of the rack ~~a lowermost portion of the rack to provide a~~  
~~space below the second longitudinal edge adapted to drain fluid used in a slide~~  
~~processing operation; and~~

a first opening adapted to support one end of a slide, and

a second support bar connected to only another one of the walls and  
comprising

a third longitudinal edge extending over a length of, and connected  
to, an inner surface of the ~~second side~~ other one of the walls to cantilever  
the second support bar from the ~~second side~~ other one of the walls,

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a fourth longitudinal edge being deflectable with respect to the ~~second side other one of the walls, the fourth longitudinal edge and~~ being spaced away from the lower edges of the rack ~~lowermost portion of the rack to provide a space below the fourth longitudinal edge adapted to drain the fluid used in the slide processing operation,~~

the four walls defining an interior space within which the first support bar, the second support bar and the slide are located, the space comprising no rack structure between a plane defined by the second longitudinal edge and the fourth longitudinal edge, the four walls and a plane defined by the lower edges of the rack; and

a second opening disposed opposite the first opening and adapted to support an opposite end of the slide,

the rack is usable for supporting the ends of the slide outside of the slide case prior to, during and after a ~~[[the]]~~ slide processing operation;

a base comprising four walls connected to a bottom, the rack being removably positionable in the base; and

a cover having a projection on an inner surface and being positionable on the base, the projection on the cover adapted to press against the slide and deflect the support bars, thereby securing the slide between the rack and the cover during transportation of the slide.

46. (currently amended) The slide case in accordance with claim 45 wherein each of the first and second support bars angles downward from a respective inner surface toward the lower edges of the opposed ends of the rack ~~[[frame]]~~, each of the first and second support bars forming an included acute angle with the respective inner surface and comprising respective ends that are spaced away from the ~~[[end]]~~ walls.

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47. (currently amended) The slide case in accordance with claim 45 further comprising ~~pairs of opposed~~ a plurality of first and second openings in the respective first and second support bars for holding and transporting a plurality of slides, each of the openings being substantially diamond shaped with two opposed corners of the diamond shape defining a line substantially perpendicular to a first edge of a respective one of the first and second support bars.

48. (currently amended) The slide case in accordance with claim 45 wherein the lower edges of ~~[[the]]~~ opposed ends of the rack comprise frame ~~define~~ a lowermost boundary of the rack ~~[[frame]]~~, and ~~[[the]]~~ opposed sides of the rack comprise frame ~~have~~ respective lower edges above the lowermost boundary of the rack ~~[[frame]]~~.

49. (currently amended) The slide case in accordance with claim 45 further comprising:  
a first latch portion disposed on the base; and  
a second latch portion disposed on ~~[[an end]]~~ a first wall of the rack such that upon positioning the rack within the base, the first and second latch portions are placed in juxtaposition to releasably secure the rack in the base.

50. (currently amended) The slide case in accordance with claim 49 wherein the first latch portion comprises a detent disposed on a wall of the base, the second latch portion comprises a recess disposed in the ~~[[end]]~~ first wall, and the ~~[[end]]~~ first wall is deflectable to permit the detent to be moved with respect to the recess between latched and unlatched positions.

51. (previously presented) The slide case in accordance with claim 45 wherein the projection comprises at least one rib extending substantially perpendicular to a plane of the slide.

52. (currently amended) The slide case in accordance with claim 45 wherein the rack ~~[[frame]]~~ further comprises first and second holes, each hole extending through a different one of the ~~[[end]]~~ walls to facilitate picking up and carrying the rack.

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Claims 53-57 (canceled)

58. (previously presented) The slide case in accordance with claim 45 further comprising a bag containing the cover positioned on the base containing the rack.

59. (previously presented) The slide case in accordance with claim 58 wherein the bag comprises a vacuum sealed barrier bag.

60. (previously presented) The slide case in accordance with claim 58 wherein the bag comprises an aluminum foil bag.

61. (currently amended) An apparatus for holding a plurality of slides during both a slide processing operation and transportation of the slides, the apparatus comprising:

a rack comprising

four substantially planar and opposed side walls having respective ends rigidly connected together, [[and]]

lower edges adapted to support the rack on a surface,

~~substantially planar and opposed end walls connected to the side walls;~~  
substantially planar support bars, each of the support bars being connected to a different one of the ~~[[side]]~~ walls and comprising

a first longitudinal edge extending over a length of, and connected to, an inner surface of ~~a respective side~~ one wall to cantilever the support bar from the ~~respective side~~ one wall,

a second longitudinal edge being deflectable with respect to the first longitudinal edge and the walls of the rack, the second longitudinal edge being spaced away from ~~a lowermost portion~~ the lower edges of the rack, ~~to provide a space below the second longitudinal edge for drainage of fluid used in a slide processing operation;~~ and

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a plurality of openings located between the first longitudinal edge and the second longitudinal edge and adapted to support ~~[[supporting]]~~ ends of respective slides,

the four walls defining an interior space within which the planar support bars and the slides are located, the space comprising no rack structure between a plane defined by the second longitudinal edge of respective support bars, the four walls and a plane defined by the lower edges of the rack, and the rack useable to support the slides, prior to, during and after a slide processing operation;

a base comprising four substantially mutually perpendicular planar walls connected to a bottom comprising an inner directed surface, the rack being removably positionable in the base with the walls of the rack being immediately adjacent to, and substantially parallel to, the walls of the base; and

a cover having a projection on an inner surface and being positionable on the base, the projection on the cover pressing against the slides, thereby securing the slides in the rack during transportation of the slides, the rack supporting the slides during both a slide processing operation and transportation of the slides.

62. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 61 wherein each of ~~[[the end]]~~ two opposed walls of the rack comprises a handle portion to facilitate lifting, carrying and placement of the rack supporting the slides.

Cancel claims 63 and 64.

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65. (new) A slide case for holding and transporting at least one slide, the slide case comprising:

- a rack comprising

- four substantially planar walls having respective ends rigidly connected together,

- lower edges adapted to support the rack on a surface,

- a first support bar connected only to one of the walls and comprising

- a first longitudinal edge extending over a length of, and connected to, an inner surface of the one of the walls to cantilever the first support bar from the one of the walls,

- a second longitudinal edge being deflectable with respect to the one of the walls and being spaced away from the lower edges of the rack; and

- a first opening adapted to support one end of a slide, and

- a second support bar connected to only another one of the walls and comprising

- a third longitudinal edge extending over a length of, and connected to, an inner surface of the other one of the walls to cantilever the second support bar from the other one of the walls,

- a fourth longitudinal edge being deflectable with respect to the other one of the walls and being spaced away from the lower edges of the rack; and

- a second opening disposed opposite the first opening and adapted to support an opposite end of the slide,

- the rack comprising no planar surface substantially perpendicular to the walls and located below the slide, and the rack is usable for supporting the ends of the slide outside of the slide case prior to, during and after a slide processing operation;

- a base comprising four walls connected to a bottom, the rack being removably positionable in the base; and

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a cover having a projection on an inner surface and being positionable on the base, the projection on the cover adapted to press against the slide and deflect the support bars, thereby securing the slide between the rack and the cover during transportation of the slide.

66. (new) A slide case for holding and transporting at least one slide, the slide case comprising:

- a rack comprising

- substantially planar and parallel opposed first and second side walls, and
  - substantially planar and parallel opposed end walls, each of the end walls having ends rigidly connected to ends of the first and second side walls,

- a first support bar comprising

- a first longitudinal edge extending over a length of, and connected to, an inner surface of the first side wall to cantilever the first support bar from the first side wall,

- a second longitudinal edge being deflectable with respect to the first side wall, the second longitudinal edge being spaced away from a lowermost portion of the rack;

- a first opening adapted to support one end of a slide, and
  - a second support bar comprising

- a third longitudinal edge extending over a length of, and connected to, an inner surface of the second side wall to cantilever the second support bar from the second side wall,

- a fourth longitudinal edge being deflectable with respect to the second side wall, the fourth longitudinal edge being spaced away from a lowermost portion of the rack; and

- a second opening disposed opposite the first opening and adapted to support an opposite end of the slide,

- the rack supporting the ends of the slide outside of the slide case during a slide processing operation;

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a base comprising four walls connected to a bottom, the rack being removably positionable in the base; and

a cover having a projection on an inner surface and being positionable on the base, the projection on the cover adapted to press against the slide and deflect the support bars, thereby securing the slide between the rack and the cover during transportation of the slide;

wherein the rack has no substantially horizontal surface forming an acute angle with either side wall below the at least one slide.